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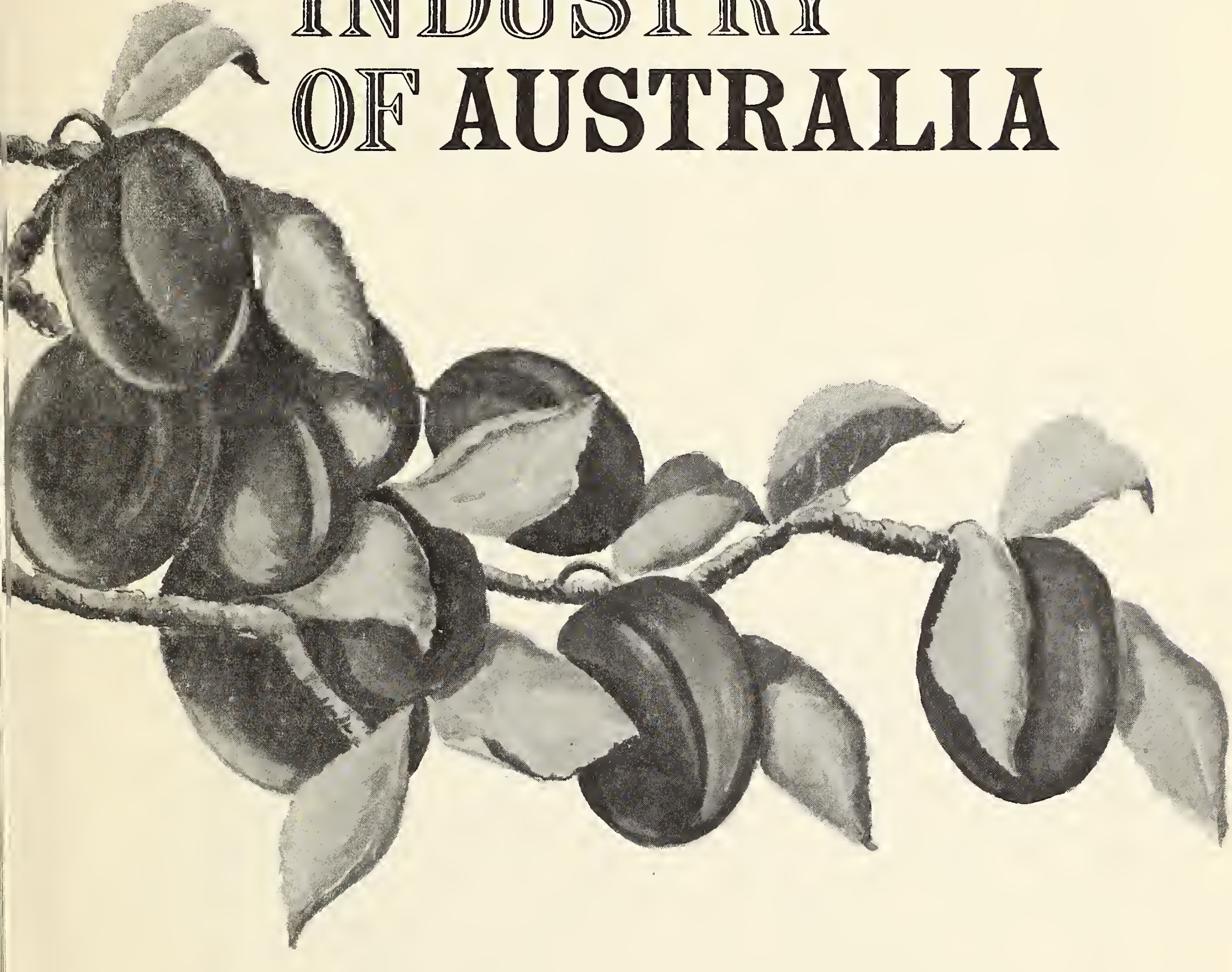
The DRIED PRUNE INDUSTRY OF AUSTRALIA



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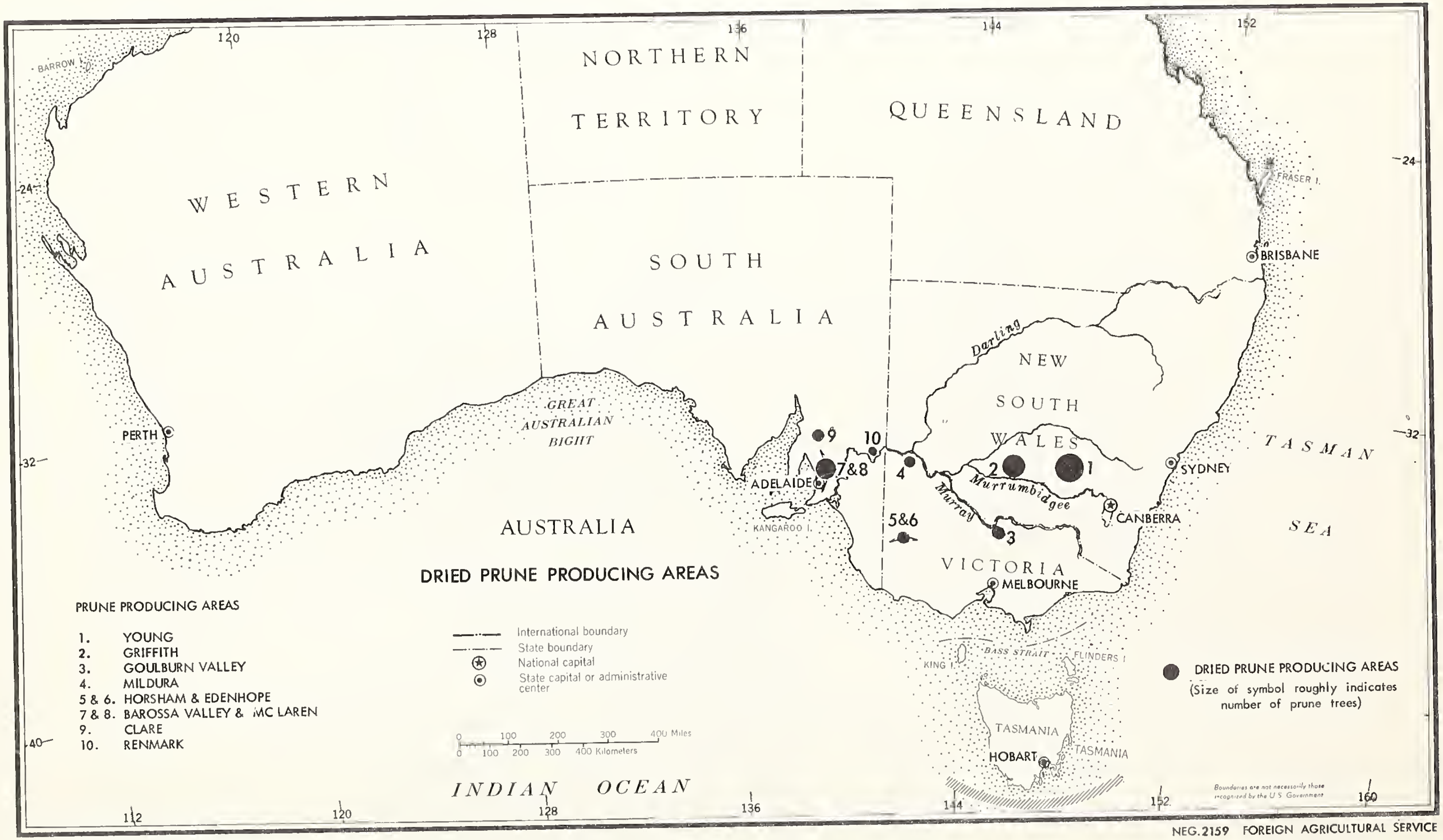
Foreign Agricultural Service
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



DRIED PRUNE PRODUCING AREAS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 2159 FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

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Foreword

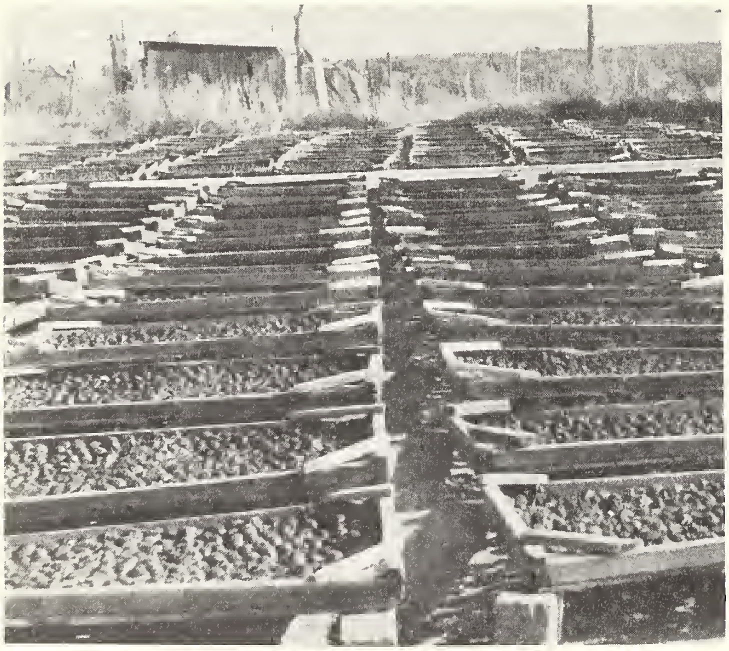
Although the Australian dried prune industry is quite small in comparison with that of the leading prune-producing countries, it is of interest to the American producer and exporter. There is an immediate interest in years when Australia has a large pack and exports a significant tonnage. There is a long-term interest too in the potential of Australia as a prune producer and exporter. In view of Australia's stature as a major dried fruit exporter, this study was carried out to provide the answer to the question, "What is the outlook for future competition from Australian prunes?"

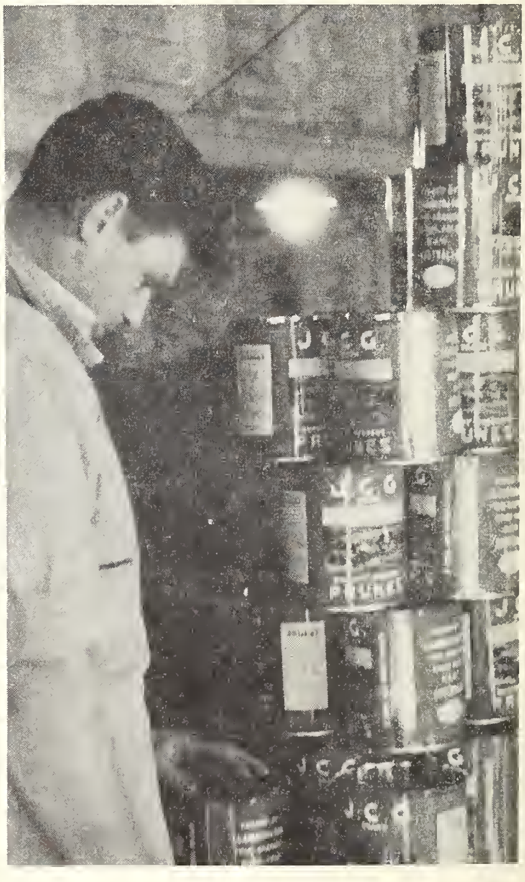
DM Rubel

D. M. Rubel, Director
Fruit and Vegetable Division

About two-thirds of the plantings in the Young district are French D'Agen—a major Australian variety.

D'Agen prunes are harvested by picking up ripe fruit as it drops naturally or by shaking trees.





Above, sun-drying prunes in drying trays. Although dehydration is more widespread, some partial or complete sun-drying is done. Right, the bulk of Australia's "moist pack" prunes are put up in 7-pound cans for home and export.

THE DRIED PRUNE INDUSTRY OF AUSTRALIA

by

Cornelis de Goede [1]

Summary

Australia produces a little over 3,000 short tons of dried prunes annually. Prunes are the principal dried tree fruit produced in Australia. Practically the entire prune crop is used for drying.

Outlets for Australian dried prunes are limited to Commonwealth markets and export prices are generally higher than those of the United States and other competitors. The trend toward self-service retailing of prepackaged food has made it difficult for Australian exporters to sell their traditional bulk moist packs in some markets, but the Australian industry has now introduced improved consumer-size packages.

The acreage planted to prunes has shown little change over the past 30 years. The difficulty of competing in export markets coupled with the limited consumption within Australia has tended to discourage expansion. Also, relatively high prices for other fruits and livestock in recent years have caused the prune industry to be regarded as a sideline in many districts, and although the entire industry is now tackling production problems, there appears to be little prospect of any significant increase in acreage.

On the other hand, current research work to find better drying and processing methods may lead to a substantial improvement in quality. Too, a shift from dry farming to irrigated districts and better cultural practices in general may to some extent increase yields and level out the severe fluctuations in fresh fruit production and export availabilities experienced in the past. Consequently, it would seem that an improvement in the competitive position of Australian dried prunes may be expected within the next few years.

The New Zealand market is likely to remain Australia's largest export outlet in normal years, although in years of large production the United Kingdom may be an important buyer as it has been in the past. Southeast Asia and some of the Pacific Islands should continue to provide small but valuable markets.

Marketing of Australian dried prunes is controlled by the various State dried fruits boards. Approximately 50 percent of the dried prune pack is marketed through the Australian Dried Fruits Association. The Association sets domestic wholesale prices for its members. During the years when the State dried fruit boards determine the dried prune supply to be in excess of domestic requirements, the Association also sets export prices.

1/ Mr. de Goede is Local Agriculturist in the Canberra office of the United States Agricultural Attache.

Fresh Prune Production

Australia's prune production is centered in three States: New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria, the principal area being New South Wales where about 70 percent of Australia's prune trees produce about 75 percent of the country's prunes. The Young district with 45 percent of New South Wales' trees is the most important district. Other important producing districts in New South Wales are the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and the Albury area.

Prune production in South Australia--with 20 percent of the total trees--is centered in the Barassa Valley and the Clare and McLaren Vale districts.

The remaining 10 percent of Australia's trees are in Victoria, largely in the Goulburn Valley and in the Edenhope and Horsham districts. Yields are generally lower in Victoria than in either New South Wales or South Australia; its production is only about 5 percent of the total.

In the Young district, farms usually range from 100 to 150 acres with about 20 to 30 acres planted to prunes. However, in irrigated districts, such as Murrumbidgee, an adequate water supply permits more diversified farming and prune plantings rarely exceed 4 or 5 acres. In South Australia and Victoria prune plantings are also small.

Varieties.--The principal varieties grown in Australia are the French types, d'Agen and Robe de Sargeant. In New South Wales production is virtually limited to these two varieties, while in Victoria and South Australia small quantities of Splendour are also grown. In the Young area approximately two-thirds of the plantings consist of d'Agen and one-third of Robe de Sargeant.

A large proportion of the plantings in the Young district are those made 35 years ago. Replacements and plantings made since 1940 were practically entirely confined to d'Agen however, and it appears likely that the importance of Robes will gradually diminish.

In the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area the percentage planted to Robes was originally substantially larger than in the Young district, but here the trend toward increased plantings of d'Agen prunes gained rapid momentum after World War II. The 1956 census showed 77 percent d'Agen and 23 percent Robes.

Although probably not as marked, there seems little doubt that trends have been similar in Victoria and South Australia in recent years, making the d'Agen prune the most popular variety. Other varieties have been tested, but apparently none has measured up to d'Agen.

Acreage and tree numbers.--The acreage planted to prunes in Australia has shown only small fluctuations since the 1920's. The total bearing and nonbearing acreage since 1950-51 has fluctuated between 4,000 and 4,300 acres. Despite this stable acreage, total tree numbers have increased 5 percent since 1950 probably because of the slight shift from dry farming to irrigation districts. In the dry farming areas the number of trees per acre is usually limited to about 70, while in the irrigation districts closer spacing is feasible and a population of 90 trees per acre is the rule. The increase in tree numbers is evident only in New South Wales, as numbers in Victoria and South Australia declined significantly since 1950.

TABLE 1.--Prune trees: Number in principal producing states, bearing and nonbearing March 31, 1946-59

Year	New South Wales		Victoria 1/		South Australia		Total 1/	
	Bearing	Non-bearing	Bearing	Non-bearing	Bearing	Non-bearing	Bearing	Non-bearing
	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees	1,000 trees
1946..	209	36	--	--	108	9	--	--
1947..	232	43	36	11	98	11	366	65
1948..	213	48	--	--	100	11	--	--
1949..	204	50	--	--	105	10	--	--
1950..	202	54	27	15	88	12	317	81
1951..	207	59	--	--	87	11	--	--
1952..	203	54	--	--	82	12	--	--
1953..	210	51	30	15	80	12	320	78
1954..	219	51	--	--	83	10	--	--
1955..	227	46	--	--	82	12	--	--
1956..	233	54	29	9	78	14	340	77
1957..	233	44	--	--	75	12	--	--
1958..	235	53	--	--	79	13	--	--
1959..	236	48	(2/)	(2/)	75	14	--	--

1/ Available on a triennial basis only.
2/ Not available.

Yields.--Over the past nine seasons, 1950-51 through 1958-59, fresh prune production has averaged 10,150 short tons per year. (Dried prune production

TABLE 2.--Prunes, fresh: Production used for drying, principal producing states, seasons 1950-51 through 1958-59

Year	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Total
	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons
1951..	8,004	754	2,291	11,049
1952..	5,916	638	1,943	8,497
1953..	8,497	754	1,653	10,904
1954..	9,454	1,015	2,726	13,195
1955..	6,931	493	1,856	9,280
1956..	7,656	493	2,030	10,179
1957..	5,423	696	2,059	8,178
1958..	6,351	841	2,523	9,715
1959..	7,714	522	2,117	10,353

Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

averaged 3,255 tons in this period.) Production fluctuates heavily from year to year, depending on seasonal conditions, particularly in the Young district where supplemental irrigation is not available. Average yields per acre in New South Wales have ranged in recent years from a low of 2.2 tons per bearing acre to as high as 3.1 tons, fresh basis.

Cultural practices.--Cultural practices vary greatly from farm to farm. Annual and biennial pruning is generally practiced, although some growers prune very little or not at all. It is believed that biennial pruning is more advantageous than annual pruning, but this has not been decisively confirmed. As a result of pruning demonstrations, more satisfactory practices have been adopted. Research in recent years on chemical thinning of prunes has had little success, but satisfactory results are expected in the near future.

The principal rootstocks used in Australia are Marianna and Myrobolan. Reports indicate that Marianna has a tendency to dwarf trees in the irrigation districts, but is satisfactory in the dry farming areas.

Cover crops are now fairly general in the Young district, although clean cultivation is also practiced there and in other areas. Just prior to harvesting, the cover crop is turned in and the land left in a state of fine tilth.

Erosion has been a problem in a number of orchards, but many new plantings are being made on the contour.

In most years a large proportion of Australian prune production consists of small sizes. This is particularly true in the Young district, where low fertility of orchards and serious rust infestations have been major problems in postwar years.

In recent years, some of Australia's cultural problems have been seriously tackled by the industry and the New South Wales Department of Agriculture through research and extension work. Extensive fertilizer trials have been carried out for some years, and as a result of demonstration work the use of nitrogenous fertilizers is increasing. Large quantities of animal manures are used by some farmers when obtainable, with chicken manure the most popular. The formerly serious rust infestations have been largely brought under control by the use of Zineb and oil sprays.

Harvesting.--Robes and d'Agen varieties are harvested by picking up the ripe fruit as it drops naturally or by gently shaking the trees. Although some progressive orchardists have experimented with harvesting sheets and other receptacles as used in California, this practice has not been generally adopted. Picking is usually done twice each week, and more frequently during hot periods or after rainfall. Robes are sometimes picked off the tree by hand, as they deteriorate rapidly on the ground. Splendour, a variety which does not drop easily, is generally left on the tree and only picked once, when most of the fruit is ripe.

TABLE 3.--Prunes, dried: Production by State, averages 1945-59 annual 1944-60
(dry weight)

Year	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Total
Average:	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons
1945-49	1,882	209	489	2,580
1950-54	2,500	219	576	3,295
1955-59	2,376	162	533	3,071
Annual:				
1944	2,552	363	654	3,569
1945	1,230	217	442	1,889
1946	2,298	211	498	3,007
1947	1,522	237	459	2,218
1948	2,968	193	409	3,570
1949	1,392	187	636	2,215
1950	2,015	146	371	2,532
1951	2,330	216	559	3,105
1952	2,046	188	475	2,709
1953	3,031	214	570	3,815
1954	3,077	332	905	4,314
1955	2,145	139	411	2,695
1956	2,500	127	589	3,216
1957	1,959	165	544	2,668
1958	2,355	201	588	3,144
1959	2,923	178	531	3,632
1960 1/	3,394	392	672	4,458

1/ Preliminary.
Dried Fruits Board of New South Wales.

Processing

Practically the entire Australian prune crop is used for drying; only negligible amounts of prunes go to the fresh fruit market or into jam manufacture.

Cold storage and transportation.--In the major growing districts, off-farm cold storage facilities are available for holding fresh fruit when in excess of dehydration facilities at peak drying periods.

Growers in some areas deliver their fruit to processing plants with their own transportation, while in other areas bulk transportation is arranged by cooperatives.

Dipping.--Dipping of the fruit is a general practice, with the boiling caustic soda dip the most popular. The larger dehydration plants use spraying equipment, but hand dipping is still common with growers who dehydrate or sun-dry their own fruit. The usual dip consists of about 2 pounds of caustic soda to 100 gallons of water, kept at the boiling point.

Drying.--The entire New South Wales pack is dehydrated. In the Young district the bulk of the crop is dehydrated in three dehydration plants at Kingsvale, Maimuru, and Wirrimah, operated by the Young District Producers' Co-operative. These plants were originally provided and operated by the New South Wales Government, but were subsequently turned over to the cooperative. Each plant has three oil-burning tunnels, and dehydrates from 340-390 short tons of dry fruit per season. The cooperative thus handles over 1,000 short tons (dry weight) each season, or nearly half the New South Wales pack. In addition to the fruit handled by the cooperative, approximately 340 short tons, dry weight, are also dehydrated in the Young district in a number of small privately-owned dehydration plants. There is also a dehydrator operated by a grower-processor in the district.

In the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area of New South Wales, the Young District Producers' Co-operative has joined with the Griffith Producers' Co-operative in processing prunes. The part of the crop in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area not handled by the Griffith Producers' Co-operative is dehydrated by growers or the Leeton Co-operative Cannery.

In Victoria and South Australia dehydration is becoming more general, but substantial quantities of prunes in these two states are still sun-dried. Partial sun-drying with subsequent tunnel dehydration is also practiced. When sun-drying, it is usual to shade-dry a few days until the fruit has wilted. In cool or cloudy weather drying trays are placed in the open immediately. Although generally cheaper than dehydration in favorable seasons, sun-drying is somewhat more hazardous. "Boiling" (excess loss of juice), dust, sand storms, and losses through slow drying weather are the principal problems.

As a result of the emphasis on quality in recent years, it appears that dehydration will largely replace sun-drying in those areas where prunes are still sun-dried. Prunes are dehydrated from 28 to 34 hours, at a temperature of about 165 to 170 degrees Fahrenheit and a humidity of 30 to 40 percent.

Both sun-dried and dehydrated prunes are held in sweat boxes for 5 or 6 weeks before delivery to the grading or packing shed.

Grading.--After drying and sweating, the prunes are brought to a central shed, graded, and stored in 3-bushel wheat bags until needed for processing. The grading shed, owned by the cooperative, seems spacious and appears capable of handling a substantially larger amount of prunes than available. Grading equipment consists of a large Anderson-Barngrover grader, which was imported from California in the early 1930's.

The Young Producers' Co-operative also has a processing shed in Sydney, where the prunes dried in Young and those produced by the Griffith Producers' Co-operative are processed and packed as needed to fill domestic and export orders.

Some prunes dehydrated in the small privately-owned dehydration plants are subsequently delivered to the Young District Producers' Co-operative for marketing, but most are sold through wholesale merchants.

Packing.--The "natural condition" dried prunes are next processed and packed. The "moist pack" is now almost universally used, although some boxed prunes continue to be produced in South Australia and Victoria.

"Moist pack" prunes are washed and either steamed or dipped in boiling water from 5 to 20 minutes. They are then packed in cans while hot, lidded, sealed, and sterilized for about 35 minutes at a temperature of about 240 degrees Fahrenheit.

The bulk of the "moist pack" is put up in 7-pound (No. 10) cans, while smaller quantities are packed in 1-pound cans. These are the normal sizes for both the domestic and export markets.

Beginning with the 1958 season, a 12-ounce can was introduced to cater for the rapidly increasing self-service store and supermarket clientele. In the past, grocery shops retailed prunes by weighing them out of the 7-pound cans, which involved handling and packing the sticky prunes at the retail level in a most unattractive manner to both the retailer and the customer. This probably contributed to the decline in popularity of prunes with the average householder. The new 12-ounce size will overcome these problems and, although somewhat higher priced, should have a greatly increased consumer appeal.

Moisture content of prunes is regulated by the Commonwealth Export Regulations, and normally prunes for the domestic market are packed under conditions and standards similar to those for export. For the canned dessert prune pack, moisture content may not be in excess of 33 percent for standard grades; 35 percent for choice grade Robe de Sargeant in No. 10 cans or smaller; or 37 percent for choice grade d'Agen in No. 10 cans or smaller. Boxed, dry-packed prunes may not have a moisture content in excess of 22 percent.

All prune packs are graded into straight lines, running from 30/40 to 100/120 per pound. In recent years suggestions have been made for composite or family packs, consisting of 30 percent 80/90's, 30 percent 90/100's and 40 percent 100/120's. This would be an alternative to straight grading in order to utilize the large proportion of small sizes to better advantage. These proposals have not been accepted by marketing authorities as yet.

Considerable work has been done by the industry and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization to devise satisfactory packing of high-moisture content prunes in other containers than cans. Spoilage has been the principal problem in marketing high-moisture content prunes in small containers, other than cans, suitable for self-service retailing. Trials with propylene oxide as a fungicide, were carried out in 1956-57. The use of propylene oxide in conjunction with heat-sealed containers prevented microbial growth. This process has not yet been entirely satisfactory in commercial practice and consequently is not used extensively. Use of cellophane, Saran-coated cellophane, polyethylene, and pliofilm for packaging material have also been tested.

Marketing

In common with other dried vine and tree fruits, the marketing of dried prunes is under the control of the State dried fruits boards. These boards, one in each producing State, were established in 1928 following an investigation of the dried fruits industry by the Development and Migration Commission. This investigation was mainly for the benefit of the dried vine industry, but legislation made the boards regulatory authorities for all dried fruits.

The boards are responsible for determining and enforcing export quotas, licensing and inspecting dehydrators and packinghouses, insuring hygienic conditions in dry yards, branding, labeling, and fixing grade standards. The boards do not always exercise all of these and other powers given them under the State legislation concerned, but they are provided if the need should arise.

The State dried fruits boards control the licensing of packinghouses and dehydrators strictly, as this control is the key to effective enforcement of marketing quotas. Each board controls the home consumption quota only for its State, and the Australian-wide marketing quota is determined by a consultative committee, comprised of the State board chairmen in consultation with the Australian Dried Fruits Association. Any noncomplier can immediately be deregistered and, through supplementary State legislation, prevented from dealing in dried fruits.

Control is not as stringent for dried prunes as for dried vine fruits. The quantity of fruit is much smaller and the proportion of fruit in excess of domestic needs is relatively unimportant. Thus the boards set domestic marketing quotas only in years of high production when the excess might lead to excessive competition on the local market. In 1954, the quota was 50 percent; in 1955, 60 percent; and in 1956, 65 percent. In 1957 and 1958, however, no marketing quotas were set because the crop was not large. On the other hand, the bumper 1959 crop necessitated a domestic marketing quota of 50 percent.

The quota in 1954 amounted to 2,157 tons; in 1955, 1,617 tons; in 1956, 2,090 tons; and in 1959, 1,816 tons. The average of these quotas is 1,920 short tons which implies that domestic consumption is of that magnitude. Consumption can also be calculated by subtracting exports from production (assuming that changes in stocks over a 5-year period are not significant). On this basis, 1955-59 average consumption was 2,130 tons. Consumption thus appears to be approximately 2,000 short tons.

The Australian Dried Fruits Association does not occupy the same prominent position in the dried prune trade as it does in the marketing of dried vine fruits. Consequently there is more leeway for competition between packers. Approximately 50 percent of the dried prune pack is marketed through the Association, and the remainder is marketed through independent packers or cooperatives.

Prices

Returns to growers have varied considerably in postwar years. In the late 1940's and early 1950's the British Ministry of Food purchased all surplus dried prunes at favorable prices. Also during this period, a satisfactory market developed in New Zealand as a result of that country restricting imports of dried prunes from the United States because of the dollar shortage. In those years, returns to growers ranged from $400 to $480 per short ton (dry weight). When the United Kingdom Government released its control on dried prunes and relaxed import restrictions, prices declined rather sharply, particularly for small sizes. Returns to growers for the 1959 crop were down to $320 to $360 per short ton.

The State dried fruits boards do not determine the price level at which prunes are to be sold, but the Australian Dried Fruits Association does set domestic wholesale prices for member packers. In a year when export quotas for dried prunes are in effect, the Australian Dried Fruits Association also determines the export price level.

Export prices are generally lower than domestic dried prune prices, the differential being determined by the volume of the export surplus and foreign demand. Exports in years when export marketing quotas were not in effect were made by independent handlers at prices similar to or only slightly below those obtainable on the domestic market. Australian dried prune f.o.b. prices (both domestic and export) have been considerably above U.S. f.o.b. quotations.

In 1957, the Australian dried prune export price for the 50/60 size was 29.4 cents, or about 14.1 cents per pound higher than the same size U. S. prune. Export prices for the 1959 pack are not available, but Australian prices were reported to be above U. S. prices.

Since the Australian supply of dried prunes has not been greatly in excess of domestic market requirements--in certain years thanks to the quota--and prices on the export market have been reasonably remunerative, there has been little difficulty in maintaining domestic prices at a relatively uniform level. Nevertheless, the Australian Dried Fruits Association has made considerable effort to get the cooperation of independent processors in quoting similar prices to those of the association for the domestic market and to adhere to identical trading terms and conditions. Apparently most non-Association processors are willing to observe the price levels set by the Association at the present time, but they do not seem inclined to adopt the Association marketing policy of selling only to selected distributors. As no agreement has been reached between the two groups, it seems that in years of bumper crops and slow demand on export markets some difficulty in maintaining domestic prices would be experienced.

TABLE 4.--Prunes, Dried: Australian domestic wholesale prices, f.o.b. or for port of shipment, by type of container annual 1956-59 1/

Size 2/	1956			1957			1958			1959			
	Pound cans	7-lb. cans	Boxes	Pound cans	7-lb. cans	Boxes	Pound cans	7-lb. cans	Boxes	12-oz. cans	Pound cans	7-lb. cans	Boxes
	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound
20-30....	--	--	--	--	--	--	39.0	33.6	34.5	--	39.0	33.6	34.5
30-40....	35.2	31.0	30.6	37.6	32.2	33.1	38.0	32.7	33.6	--	38.0	32.7	33.6
40-50....	34.3	30.1	29.6	36.6	31.3	32.2	37.1	31.7	32.7	37.3	37.1	31.7	32.7
50-60....	33.4	29.2	28.7	35.9	30.3	31.3	36.2	30.8	31.7	36.1	36.2	30.8	31.7
60-70....	30.6	26.4	25.9	34.8	29.4	30.3	35.2	29.9	30.8	34.8	35.2	29.9	30.8
70-80....	28.2	24.0	23.6	32.9	27.5	29.4	34.3	28.8	29.9	33.6	34.2	28.9	29.9
80-90....	--	21.7	21.2	--	24.7	27.5	--	27.1	28.8	32.4	--	27.1	28.0
90-100...	--	18.9	18.4	--	22.4	24.7	--	25.2	26.1	--	--	25.2	26.1
100-120..	--	16.1	15.6	--	19.1	22.9	--	20.5	21.5	--	--	20.5	21.5

1/ Choice quality.

2/ Number of prunes per pound.

Australian Dried Prune Association.

TABLE 5.--Prunes, dried: Australian export prices, f.o.b. State of production, by type of container 1/, annual 1956 and 1957

Size 2/	1956			1957			
	Pound can	28-oz. can	7-lb. can	Pound can	28-oz. can	7-lb. can	Boxes
	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound
20-30	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
30-40	31.3	50.4	27.1	35.5	--	30.3	31.3
40-50	29.4	45.7	25.2	34.5	--	29.4	30.3
50-60	28.5	43.9	24.3	33.6	--	28.5	29.4
60-70	21.0	30.8	16.8	32.7	54.1	27.5	28.5
70-80	17.3	24.3	13.1	31.3	51.3	26.4	27.5
80-90	15.4	20.5	11.2	--	--	23.3	26.1
90-100	14.5	19.6	10.3	--	--	21.5	23.3
100-120	13.5	18.2	9.3	--	--	17.7	21.5

1/ Choice quality.
2/ Number of prunes per pound.
Australian Dried Fruits Association

TABLE 6.--Prunes, dried: United States f.o.b. California quotations, bulk, marketing year 1955-59, 1/

Size 2/	Marketing year, October-September 3/				
	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959 4/
	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound	Cents per pound
20-30	30.7	27.3	27.9	32.1	28.0
30-40	25.1	21.5	20.1	25.0	24.5
40-50	23.8	18.8	17.2	24.0	23.5
50-60	21.4	16.2	15.3	23.5	22.0
60-70	18.9	14.2	13.8	--	21.0
70-80	15.5	12.5	12.8	--	--
80-90	12.9	11.2	12.1	--	--
90-100	11.2	9.9	11.2	--	--
100-120	9.9	9.2	--	--	--

1/ Choice quality.
2/ Number of prunes per pound.
3/ Simple monthly averages.
4/ October 1959 through May 1960.
California Fruit News.

Foreign Trade

Exports fluctuate from year to year, generally in line with the size of the crop. In 1957 and 1958 they were at a low level because of relatively small crops and a slight increase in domestic consumption. In 1955, 1,745 tons were shipped and in 1956, 1,364 short tons, but in 1957 only 186 tons were exported. Exports during 1958 amounted to 330 tons--a slight recovery from the low in the previous year. In 1959, they rose sharply to 1,082 tons.

TABLE 7.--Prunes, dried: Exports by country of destination, averages 1934-38, and 1951-55, annual 1955-58

Country of destination	Average		Annual				
	1934-38	1951-55	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons
Boxed:							
Europe:							
Denmark	--	80	3	30	--	--	--
United Kingdom	633	365	433	203	2	--	370
Total	633	445	436	233	2	--	1/ 374
British West Indies	--	34	43	70	28	2	76
New Zealand	193	425	87	163	27	88	41
Other British countries	16	56	8	5	2	19	28
Other	9	79	63	25	19	21	13
Total	851	1,039	637	496	78	130	532
Canned:							
United Kingdom	(2/)	(2/)	855	562	--	--	323
New Zealand	(2/)	(2/)	108	198	57	128	129
Other British countries	(2/)	(2/)	100	62	46	67	81
Other	(2/)	(2/)	45	46	5	5	17
Total	(2/)	(2/)	1,108	868	108	200	550
Grand total	851	1,039	1,745	1,364	186	330	1,082

1/ Includes 4 tons not designated above.
2/ Not separately recorded until 1955; canned dried prunes previously included with other canned fruits.
Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

In recent years Australia's principal export outlet for dried prunes has been New Zealand. In earlier years, the United Kingdom took substantial quantities of Australian prunes, but in 1957 and 1958 practically no shipments were made to that country. However, in 1959, the United Kingdom was again the largest market for Australian prunes, taking 370 tons boxed and 323 tons canned. On the other hand, 1959 Australian exports to New Zealand were reduced as U. S. shipments of dried prunes to that country increased. Other markets receiving Australian prunes include British West Indies, British East Africa, and other British Islands in the Pacific and Indian Ocean area.